

CONVERSATION WITH A ROMAN CATHOLIC ABOUT MEL GIBSON'S MOVIE

March 5, 2004 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

I received the following e-mail from a Roman Catholic on the subject of Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion of the Christ*:

CHALLENGE FROM A ROMAN CATHOLIC

I stumbled upon some writings of yours when a fundamentalist I know emailed it to me. I got maybe two-thirds of the way through the email before I gave up in complete bewilderment.

Firstly, on the issue of graven images, I would gently remind that God also commands specific carvings for the ark of the covenant, including images of cherubim. Why would He do that if all images are bad?

And secondly, why does God create human beings with senses of sight, smell, hearing, and such if he does not intend to use them as a means to draw us closer to him? Should all Christians refer to their own senses as intrinsically evil things that will only lead to idolatry?

If a person has pictures in their home of people they love, they do not kiss the picture thinking they are actually showing affection to the person. They, as a person with senses, are merely reminding themselves of the loved one. This same concept applies to the movie. Billy Graham doesn't read his Bible and think "And this is the part where Jim Cavaziel, who is really Jesus, gets scourged." How ridiculous. He merely uses the movie as a visual tool when reading the Gospels, and that is not forbidden. Remember that at the time the Gospels were written, readers were living among Romans, and scourging and crucifixion. They knew exactly what it meant. The generations of today however, especially in America, don't know that, and don't understand the excruciating pain "crucifixion" entails just from reading a verse in the Scriptures. The movie brings the pain Our Lord endured home.

Furthermore, if I'm not mistaken, the Scriptures say of Christ: "To the Jews he was a Jew, to the Greeks he became a Greek." Jesus and the Apostles evangelized people by meeting up with their culture, not abandoning it. That's why the Gospels are different. John in particular was written to help Greeks understand Christ. In the same way, making movies is taking a huge cultural venue and using it as a means to spread the Good News. Mel Gibson has brought Christ to America, using his gifts and talents for God's greater glory. The purpose of the movie would have to be twisted to accomplish what you say, and just because something can be misinterpreted or twisted does not negate the good that it offers. If that were true, then we should dismiss the Scriptures, for even Satan uses them to do his work.

I'm not even going to go into the issue of Mary as much as I could, because your hostile anti-Catholicism wafts of the pages. But I will point out a few things that the Scriptures say:

- At the wedding at Cana, not only do we see Jesus honoring his mother's request, but we also see her pointing the way to her Son: "Do whatever he tells you."

- Yes, Jesus said that whoever does the will of the Father is his mother, etc. So take a look at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke and see who is doing the will of the Father, and giving all the credit to God.

- I would really beg to differ with you on the issue of her portrayal in the movie. What mother would've acted any differently than Mary did with her Son? Are you unfamiliar of the bonds between mother and son? It's called oxytocin, and there's nothing "holy" or "co-redemptress" about it. It's a human condition that God created.

- Catholicism doesn't teach that Mary is a co-redemptress. In fact, Pope John Paul II rejected a petition from some misguided Catholics to make her a deity.

Jesus loved his mom. He treated her with honor. Why don't you?

REPLY FROM BROTHER CLOUD

Thank you for taking the time to write. I get tons of mail and cannot respond personally and at length to all of it, but I have decided to reply to your questions and challenges at some length.

FIRST, YOU ASK WHY, "IF ALL IMAGES ARE BAD," DID GOD COMMAND THAT CARVINGS OF THE CHERUBIM BE MADE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE.

The answer is that all images are not bad. The second commandment in Exodus 20 does not forbid all images; it forbids all images OF GOD and images that are worshipped as God. Here is the exact wording:

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Exodus 20:4-5).

The cherubim were angels and not God and the Israelites did not worship them. It is not wrong to make images and pictures of things as long as they are not intended to depict God or to be worshipped. Since Jesus Christ is God, it is therefore forbidden to make any depictions of Him. That much is plain from God's own commandment, and who are we to try to change God's Word?

SECOND, YOU ASK, "WHY DOES GOD CREATE HUMAN BEINGS WITH SENSES OF SIGHT, SMELL, HEARING, AND SUCH IF HE DOES NOT INTEND [FOR US] TO USE THEM AS A MEANS TO DRAW US CLOSER TO HIM?"

The answer is that there is a right way and a wrong way to use our senses. The only way that we can know right from wrong is the Revelation that God has mercifully given us in the Bible. If I use my senses in a fashion that not in contradiction to the Bible, that is fine; but if I am doing things that are contrary to the Bible, I am wrong. It is that simple.

One writer put it this way: "God's Word doesn't give us these warnings [about making graven images] in order to deprive us of visual gratification. After all, He filled His creation with glorious flowers,

magnificent multicolored birds, vibrant, luminous fish and countless other delights to our eyes. But, like the forbidden fruit in the garden ... one kind of image would be out of bounds: any image that depicted God Himself or any of the world's false gods" ("Mel Gibson's 'Passion,' Crossroad, February 2004).

In the Old Testament God gave the Israelites a priesthood, with special garments, special offerings, special incense, consecrated water, etc.

Every detail of the worship of God in Old Testament times was precisely described in the Scriptures and the Jews were not allowed to make anything that was different. Even the incense and perfume used in the Old Testament worship was to be made according to the precise recipe in Scripture (Ex. 30:9; 34:31-38). God said to Moses, "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Exodus 25:9). God was very clear about this matter. Israel had to worship Him exactly according to His Word, and when they tried to make their own way of worship, they were severely judged. When two priests, Nadab and Abihu tried offered fire which did not conform to God's instructions, they were burned up (Leviticus 10:1-7)! When a man went out on the sabbath day and gathered sticks to start a fire, which was contrary to God's Sabbath law, he was put to death (Num. 15:32-36)! When a priest reached out his hand to keep the ark of God from falling, he was killed by God, because the ark was not supposed to be touched in that manner; it was supposed to be carried in the exact fashion which God had described in the Scriptures (2 Sam. 6:6-7).

Jesus Christ rebuked the Jewish Pharisees because they added their human traditions to God's Word. "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:-9).

Now we are living in the New Testament age. In Matthew 16 the Lord Jesus said that He was going to build His church, and that is what we see in Acts and the Epistles. In this present time God has established the church to take the place of Israel in the world (not that God is finished with Israel, but right now the church is God's instrument in the world -- Rom. 11:25-29). God has given specific instructions in the Scriptures about how the churches are to worship. The New Testament Scriptures cover every aspect of church life and doctrine, including repentance, faith, grace, works, baptism, the Lord's Supper, bishops and elders, and evangelism. Believers do not have any authority to change these things, to add to them or take away from them. Paul instructed Timothy that believers are to obey the New Testament pattern *until Jesus returns*. After instructing Timothy in the things concerning the church, Paul said, "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Timothy 6:13-14). The Bible pattern for the church is to be kept without spot (referring even to the details) until Jesus returns.

In the New Testament church there is no special priesthood, no special garments, no incense, no consecrated water, no sacrifices, no tabernacles or temples, no bells or burning lamps. All of those things were a part of Israel's worship in the Old Testament, but none of that is a part of the church's worship.

Thus, we do not have any Bible authority today to worship God with sight, smell, hearing, and touch, *beyond the simple pattern given in the New Testament Epistles*. Today we worship God BY FAITH. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope..." (Rom. 8:24).

THIRD, YOU SAY, "IF A PERSON HAS PICTURES IN THEIR HOME OF PEOPLE THEY LOVE, THEY DO NOT KISS THE PICTURE THINKING THEY ARE ACTUALLY SHOWING AFFECTION TO THE PERSON. ... BILLY GRAHAM ... MERELY USES THE MOVIE AS A VISUAL TOOL WHEN READING THE GOSPELS, AND THAT IS NOT FORBIDDEN."

To the contrary, this type of thing is definitely forbidden by God's Word. We are not allowed to use pictures and images to assist us in thinking about God. It is not wrong for me to use a picture to remind me of my wife when I travel alone to far away countries on preaching trips, but it is wrong for me to use any sort of picture to remind me of God. One is not forbidden in Scripture; the other is. You are confusing human things with Divine. We are told to lean not to our own thinking (Prov. 3:5-6). The Bible warns, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 55:8).

FOURTH, YOU SAY, "THE MOVIE BRINGS THE PAIN OUR LORD ENDURED HOME."

Among many problems with that statement is the fact that we have no way of knowing whether Mel Gibson's movie accurately depicts the scourging we read about in Scripture, either in the sense of how Jesus was scourged or in the sense of how He responded or in the sense of His interaction with others who were involved. In fact, there is every reason to believe it goes far beyond the way Jesus was actually scourged and that it does not accurately portray any aspect of what happened that day. One reviewer rightly observed that if Jesus had been scourged like that which we see in Gibson's movie He would have died three times on the way to the cross! And that is only one aspect of the error.

Further, if God had wanted us to know every detail of Christ's suffering, He would have told us in the Scriptures, but that is not how the Scriptures describe these scenes. The Scriptures pass over His suffering very quickly, merely stating that He was scourged and that He was crucified that He was mocked, etc.

Is there no spiritual danger about the graphic way in which Mel Gibson depicts the suffering of Christ. Consider this warning:

"How will the intense emotional experience of seeing this violent movie affect viewers -- especially children and youth already immersed in violent 'entertainment'? Will it further desensitize some to intense violence, build a craving for other emotional experiences, or alter the foundation for their faith? I appreciate the following statement by our friend, Kurt Fiech: 'After reading this, ask yourself the following question: Is this how God really wants us to evangelize the unsaved TODAY, by overwhelming their SENSES in an EXPERIENTIAL display of realistic torture and sadism that would sear their minds and others who sees this? Experientialism trumping the preaching of the Word? Having had the EXPERIENCE of caring for a dying daughter with an inoperable brain tumor for a year up until her death, I can unequivocally say I would not wish that EXPERIENCE on my worst enemy. I can describe it in words to other parents and they understand and can relate to the pain and anguish. They don't need to have to EXPERIENCE it themselves. Likewise, as Christians, we can evangelize to the unsaved and describe in words the Gospel -- the pain and suffering Jesus went through, His death, resurrection, etc. and it will be the Holy Spirit who, spiritually, will convict the person. Do we need to promote a movie that seeks to assault your emotions, in all its graphic horror ... when we have the Truth in the Word that can be preached and/or read? Which of these efforts do you think God would be pleased with?' ("Mel Gibson's 'Passion,' Crossroad, February 2004).

FIFTH, YOU SAID, “JESUS AND THE APOSTLES EVANGELIZED PEOPLE BY MEETING UP WITH THEIR CULTURE, NOT ABANDONING IT. ... IN THE SAME WAY, MAKING MOVIES IS TAKING A HUGE CULTURAL VENUE AND USING IT AS A MEANS TO SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS.”

The answer is that while the Apostles did try to preach in such a way that people could understand the Gospel and while they were “made all things to all men” that they “might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:22), they DID NOT DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD BE CONTRARY TO THE BIBLE. In both their message and their method they were restricted by the God’s commandments and principles in the New Testament Scriptures.

For example, the people of the great city of Athens in Paul’s day were image-oriented; they had images to every conceivable god. But when Paul preached to them, he did not make an image of Jesus on the cross and use that so that he could conform the message to their culture. He simply preached God’s Word and boldly demanded that they repent of their sin and idolatry (Acts 17).

In this conversation so far we have seen repeatedly that the chief difference between the Roman Catholic way of thinking and the Biblical way of thinking is that the Roman Catholic believes that we have liberty to go beyond the Bible, to add Catholic tradition and papal proclamations and instruction from saints and mystics. The Bible way of thinking is that we do not have such liberty, that we are bound strictly by the Scriptures in all matters. The Bible is the SOLE authority for faith and practice. This is the heart of the debate pertaining to Mel Gibson’s movie.

SIXTH, YOU SAY, “THE PURPOSE OF THE MOVIE WOULD HAVE TO BE TWISTED TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU SAY, AND JUST BECAUSE SOMETHING CAN BE MISINTERPRETED OR TWISTED DOES NOT NEGATE THE GOOD THAT IT OFFERS. IF THAT WERE TRUE, THEN WE SHOULD DISMISS THE SCRIPTURES, FOR EVEN SATAN USES THEM TO DO HIS WORK.”

There is a great difference between the Bible and Mel Gibson’s movie. The one is perfect; the other is imperfect and blemished when compared with the biblical standard. The Bible can be twisted for evil purposes, but in itself it is good and perfect. Mel Gibson’s movie, on the other hand, is not good in itself when measured by the Bible. It is idolatrous and it depicts many things contrary to the Bible account.

SEVENTH, YOU SAY, “I’M NOT EVEN GOING TO GO INTO THE ISSUE OF MARY AS MUCH AS I COULD, BECAUSE YOUR HOSTILE ANTI-CATHOLICISM WAFTS OF THE PAGES.”

It is true that I am anti-Roman Catholic Church, but that is only because the Roman Catholic Church teaches doctrine that is contrary to the blessed Scriptures. I am taught by God to measure everything by the Scriptures, and if it is wrong, I am taught to reject it. This is what the godly Psalmist taught us: “Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way” (Psalm 119:129). The apostles taught the same thing. “Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Rom. 12:9).

The Lord knows my heart, and I do not hate Roman Catholic people in any sense whatsoever. To the contrary, I love them enough (as this lengthy e-mail demonstrates) to tell them the truth.

EIGHTH, YOU SAY, “JESUS SAID THAT WHOEVER DOES THE WILL OF THE FATHER IS HIS MOTHER, ETC. SO TAKE A LOOK AT THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE AND SEE WHO IS DOING THE WILL OF THE FATHER, AND GIVING ALL THE CREDIT TO GOD.”

Yes, Mary did submit to the will of God and did give Him glory. That was wise on her part and the Bible commends it. But she was only one of many who did that. What about Elizabeth, Mary’s cousin, and godly Anna in the temple, etc. They, too, did the will of God and gave all credit to Him. To single out Mary as the Roman Catholic Church does and to make a special focus of exaltation is wrong. The Bible does not exalt Mary after the fashion of the Roman Catholic Church. Most Catholic churches and institutions are named after Mary, but there is not one example of a church or missionary enterprise being named after Mary in the New Testament. There is not one example of Mary being the Queen of Heaven or being prayed to or interceding for anyone.

On my last visit to Rome in April 2003 I was again impressed at how much Mary is exalted. Just outside of the San Giovanni Laterno church is a large crucifix with Jesus on one side and Mary on the other. In the Saints Vincent and Anastasius is a chapel of the Virgin of Grace with an image of Mary. A plaque in the chapel says, “Cardinal Benedetto Odescalchi, who became the pope with the name of Innocent XI, initiated THE WORSHIP OF THE IMAGE, placed on the altar in 1677, and wanted his heart to be buried here, not in the main chapel.” At the Santa Maria Maggiore basilica there is a huge mosaic in the apse behind the altar depicting Jesus crowning Mary as Queen of Heaven and Mary sharing His throne.

None of this has any basis whatsoever in the Bible.

NINTH, YOU SAY, “WHAT MOTHER WOULD’VE ACTED ANY DIFFERENTLY THAN MARY DID WITH HER SON? ARE YOU UNFAMILIAR OF THE BONDS BETWEEN MOTHER AND SON? IT’S CALLED OXYTOCIN, AND THERE’S NOTHING ‘HOLY’ OR ‘CO-REDEMPTRESS’ ABOUT IT. IT’S A HUMAN CONDITION THAT GOD CREATED.”

It is true that mothers naturally feel great affection for their children. My wife and I have four grown children, including two sons, and I also have a mother who is still living and who has loved me unflinching for all of my 54 years. I therefore know these things by personal experience. Mary’s affection for her son at the hour of His suffering, though, is not mentioned in the Gospel accounts. It is not even hinted at. The Scripture does not tell us to delve into such things that are beyond the Bible. There is no doubt that Mary was hurt deeply by what she witnessed. But what Mary felt has nothing to do with Christ’s suffering or the gospel. That is a naturalistic approach to the gospel story, which is precisely what we see in Rome’s doctrine of Mary. You have no biblical authority to insert your motherly feelings into the gospel story. None.

TENTH, YOU SAY, “CATHOLICISM DOESN’T TEACH THAT MARY IS A CO-REDEMPTRESS. IN FACT, POPE JOHN PAUL II REJECTED A PETITION FROM SOME MISGUIDED CATHOLICS TO MAKE HER A DEITY.”

To the contrary, you do not know your Catholic doctrine. In the Vatican Council II declarations of the 1960s Mary is given titles that belong solely to Jesus Christ:

“Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of ADVOCATE, HELPER, BENEFACTRESS, AND MEDIATRIX” (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, chap. 8, II, 62, pp. 382-383).

There is no significant difference between the title MEDIATRIX and the title Co-REDEMPRESS. Both are blasphemous when given to anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

The *New Catholic Catechism*, first published in Latin in 1992, says that Mary brings eternal salvation to men through her intercession:

“... Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us gifts of eternal salvation” (*New Catholic Catechism*, #969, English edition 1994).

This teaching has NO support from the Bible whatsoever and is, in fact, 100% contrary to what the Bible teaches. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).

Further, you don’t know the beliefs of your own pope. At least five times Pope John Paul II has referred to Mary by the title “CO-REDEMPTRIX” in his papal teachings. For example, in 1985, in Guayaquil, Ecuador, the pope said: "Mary goes before us and accompanies us. ... In fact, at Calvary SHE UNITED HERSELF WITH THE SACRIFICE OF HER SON that led to the foundation of the Church; her maternal heart shared to the very depths the will of Christ 'to gather into one all the dispersed children of God' (Jn. 11:52). HAVING SUFFERED FOR THE CHURCH, Mary deserved to become the Mother of all the disciples of her Son, the Mother of their unity. ... In fact Mary's role as COREDEMPTRIX did not cease with the glorification of her Son" (Pope John Paul II, quoted by *Inside the Vatican*, July 1997, p. 23).

In his general papal audience address of April 9, 1997, the pope said: “Mary ... co-operated during the event itself [the crucifixion] and in the role of mother; thus her co-operation embraces the whole of Christ's saving work. SHE ALONE WAS ASSOCIATED IN THIS WAY WITH THE REDEMPTIVE SACRIFICE THAT MERITED THE SALVATION OF ALL MANKIND. IN UNION WITH CHRIST AND IN SUBMISSION TO HIM, SHE COLLABORATED IN OBTAINING THE GRACE OF SALVATION FOR ALL HUMANITY” (Vatican Information Service).

Further, many other popes have exalted Mary as mediator and advocate and co-redemptrix. Examples are Leo XIII (1878-1903), Pope Pius X (1903-1914), Pope Pius XI (1922-1939), and Pius XII (1939-1958). During a radio message concluding the Jubilee of the Redemption, April 28, 1935, Pope Pius XI gave the title CO-REDEMPTRIX to Mary.

ELEVENTH, YOU SAY, “JESUS LOVED HIS MOM. HE TREATED HER WITH HONOR. WHY DON'T YOU?”

My reply is that I do love and honor Mary. I love her in the way the Bible instructs me to love her. The Bible says, “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Rom. 12:10). I love and honor Mary in precisely that sense.

I love and honor her because she submitted to God's will in the birth of Christ. I love her because she believed in Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour and was thus present in the upper room awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1).

I love and honor Mary like I would any other godly person depicted in the Bible, not more and not less than, I love Mary Magdalene or Phebe or Priscilla. I love them for their faith in Christ and for whatever role they have had in encouraging and instructed me in my faith. I love them as fellow members of the family of God.

Beyond this, the Bible nowhere tells us to give Mary a special honor. The Bible nowhere says that Mary is the mother of anyone other than Jesus (and John, after Jesus gave her away at the cross). Mary is NOT my mother in any sense whatsoever. She is where the Bible says she is the mother of all believers. Show me where the Bible says a believer is to pray to Mary. Show me where the Bible says she was made the Queen of Heaven. Show me where the Bible says she can hear prayers or that she can intercede for anyone. Show me where the Bible calls her Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, or Mediatrix.

Further, since the cross, even Jesus Himself has no special relationship with Mary. He GAVE HIS MOTHER AWAY TO JOHN!

And even long before the hour of suffering arrived, Jesus had made His relationship with Mary clear, as follows:

"Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:47-50).

Thus every believing woman is just as much a mother in and to the Lord as Mary is. That is what Jesus said, and who are we to contract it?

Jesus did everything He could to DE-emphasize His natural relationship with Mary even during His earthly ministry, and the apostles said ABSOLUTELY NOTHING about her in their epistles. If she were indeed the Queen of Heaven, the Mother of all the faithful, the Advocate and Mediatrix, etc., surely the Apostles would have at least mentioned this!

FINALLY, YOU SAID THAT YOU GAVE UP READING MY ARTICLE "IN COMPLETE BEWILDERMENT."

According to the Bible, the reason for your bewilderment and inability to understand what I am preaching is a lack of spiritual enlightenment. This comes only through the new birth.

To understand the Bible requires more than intellect and education and religion. It requires spiritual enlightenment. It requires being born again. Consider the warning that Jesus Christ gave to the Jewish ruler Nicodemus in John chapter 3. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John chapter 3 then explains that to be born again, I must believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins on the cross and that He rose from the dead and that He is the only Lord and Saviour of the world.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16-18).

The Bible promises that when you understand that you are a great sinner before God (the Bible says that even our righteousness is as filthy rags before a holy God -- Isaiah 64:6); and when you believe that Jesus Christ died for all of your sins and that through His death and blood, and His death and blood alone, you receive eternal life. That is when you are born again. You must receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour and give up the idea that works and sacraments and religion can help in your salvation. When you do that you will receive the Holy Spirit, and He will give you wisdom so that you can understand the things of God.

“In whom [Jesus Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation [that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead as the Lord and Saviour of the world]: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14).

The word “earnest” means down payment or promise. The Holy Spirit is given to the believer as the promise of eternal life in Jesus Christ. The “purchased possession” refers to the eternal salvation that Jesus Christ bought with His death and blood when He died on the cross.

May the Lord help you understand these things.

In Jesus Christ,
David Cloud
Director, Way of Life Literature

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